

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

2023
2024

How a Social Work Alumna is Confronting Child Welfare Challenges

PLUS

**Addressing Inequities:
Alumna's Work in Native
American Healthcare Access**

**Celebrating 50 Years of
Student-Centered Excellence**

**Substance Misuse Is on the
Rise—How Should Mental
Health Professionals Respond?**



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UNIVERSITY

School of
Behavioral Health

SCHOOL OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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From the Dean

I am honored to present the fifth edition of the School of Behavioral Health (SBH) alumni magazine. In this issue, I am delighted to share the remarkable accomplishments of our alumni, students, and faculty as they continue to make significant strides in improving clinical outcomes through deep community engagement, innovative practices, and the translation of science into practical solutions.

Furthermore, I am thrilled to share some recent milestones and accomplishments since our last publication. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences, and we celebrate the more than 3,000 graduates from that program. Both the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology (Master of Social Work program) and the Department of Psychology celebrate their 30th year, with over 2,000 graduates combined.

While our degree programs continue to thrive, our School has also recently received approval for the SBH Practice, Research, and Clinical Training Innovation Center (PRACTIC). This center, coupled with our academic programs, is elevating student professional development to new heights. The center's mission is fostering collaborative translational behavioral health research and innovation in clinical education and practice across all SBH disciplines while steadfastly supporting the mission of Loma Linda University. To accomplish this mission, the SBH PRACTIC is comprised of two integral divisions: the Clinical Services and Education Division that houses our SBH Resiliency Clinic (an academic training clinic providing therapy and assessment services by master's and doctoral students under the supervision of faculty); and the Research and Community Training Division that fosters research development, provides administrative oversight for our funded studies, offers specialized training for our SBH students and community partners, and facilitates the operation of our Translational Research Across Childhood (TRAC) program, a consortium of externally funded research projects fostering innovation opportunities.

Finally, thank you for your commitment to providing quality behavioral health services. Your contributions as highly trained professionals are acknowledged worldwide, and the impact you make on the lives of others is immeasurable. Your dedication is truly commendable. As you continue to serve, please remember to prioritize your own resilience and self-care. Time spent cherishing your well-being is both important and well-deserved.

May God continue to bless you and your endeavors.

Dr. Bev Buckles, Dean
School of Behavioral Health

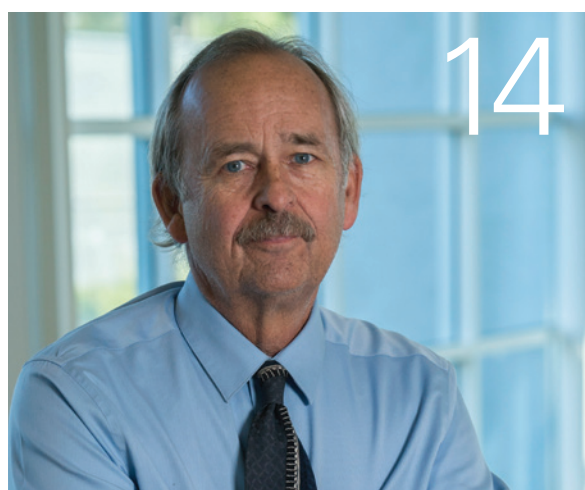
P.S. Keep an eye out for invitations to local dinners and get-togethers organized by the SBH departments. We hope to see you at one of these events. We welcome your ideas about ways we can better connect with you, our alumni!

Your contributions
as highly trained
professionals are
acknowledged
worldwide, and
the impact you
make on the
lives of others
is immeasurable.

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In This Issue



Mission

The mission of the School of Behavioral Health is “to provide a spiritually supportive context for teaching, clinical practice, and research innovation that pursues integrative behavioral health aimed at reducing health disparities and promoting social justice in a global context locally and globally.” The mission of the School of Behavioral Health is underpinned by Loma Linda University’s commitment to the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ to transform lives through whole person care.

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How a Social Work Alumna is Confronting Child Welfare Challenges

Larry Becker

The many issues that foster youth face first came to Dr. Rhoda Smith's (Social Policy and Social Research PhD, 2017) attention while she worked for Child Protective Services in the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services. Dr. Smith noted that teenage parents were being held to the same standards as adult parents, and became troubled that they were expected to meet the conditions required to keep custody of their children without additional assistance and support.

"Teens who were unable to retain custody of their children and dealing with the trauma that brought them into the child welfare system was a perfect setup for mental health issues," Dr. Smith told us. "The mental health needs quite often were not being met."

Dr. Smith identified a number of challenges faced when addressing the complex needs of teens who have been removed from their families of origin: a lack of consistency and instability upon entering the child welfare system, anxiety related to their legal status, having to interact with numerous adult caregivers and service providers, and a lack of family contact.

"We need to place more emphasis on creating environments where foster teens have the same opportunities as young people now in the system," Dr. Smith said. While legislation exists which allows foster parents to give youths in their care some autonomy, Dr. Smith says many foster parents are reluctant to do so out of fear of facing charges of being negligent, being sued, or losing their license. This anxiety on both sides of the foster relationship can have a detrimental effect on foster teens' development.

Dr. Smith's doctoral dissertation at the School of Behavioral Health focused on how foster youth are socialized to dating and sexual behavior. One of her key findings was that there is no standard protocol for how child welfare workers and foster parents communicate expectations and education to and with foster youth.

"No specific person is responsible for sharing this information with foster youth,"



Dr. Smith said. "It's happening very hit or miss, if at all."

Dr. Smith believes that specialized units need to be established that teach teens how to develop and maintain healthy relationships, complete their education, become independent while taking on the demands of parenting and adulthood so they can leave foster care able to care for themselves and future families.

Dr. Smith became Associate Professor and Director of Field Education at Concordia University - Chicago in July 2023. Previously she was an Assistant Professor at Springfield College and the Erikson Institute.

First attracted to Loma Linda University (LLU) because of its class size and faith-based mission, Dr. Smith's doctoral program at the School of Behavioral Health served as a solid foundation for her career success.

"The program is rigorous, but will allow you to pursue your studies in a supportive and well resourced environment," Dr. Smith said. "When I arrived at Loma Linda University, I was offered a research assistantship with Dr. Sigrid James. She really helped me to adjust to doctoral studies and with her mentorship I was able to focus my research and pursue my research question in a way that the findings could be applied in the real world."

Pioneering Therapy in Kenya: Alumna Expands Marriage & Family Counseling

Larry Becker



Dr. Michelle Karume (Doctor of Marital and Family Therapy, 2010) currently heads the MA Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program at the United States International University-Africa in Nairobi, playing a significant leadership role in expanding marriage and family services in Kenya. Dr. Karume believes expanding the availability of MFT professionals in Kenya will lead to significant improvements in several behavioral health challenges that the country faces.

"Marital issues, cultural issues that are sometimes misused, suicide among the young is unfortunately on the rise," Dr. Karume says. "I have found many people struggle with lack of sleep, overstimulation from social media, self-esteem and self-awareness issues, and family dysfunctions, to name a few."

Dr. Karume's work includes strengthening the professional development of her MFT students alongside their rigorous academic program. Her mentorship has led to USIU-A students presenting at local and international events: in October 2023, four of her students presented virtually at the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy's Systemic Family Therapy Conference. She also led the establishment of the Systemic Family Therapy Association-Kenya (SFTAK), an organization with an important role in growing the MFT field through conferences and training events. Additionally, Dr. Karume is leading her program through the rigorous Commission on Accreditation of Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) accreditation process, hoping to become the only accredited MFT program on the African continent.

Dr. Karume's journey to her career in MFT began with a change in direction during her undergraduate studies.

"Two things were clear to me once I completed my bachelor's in psychology," Dr. Karume recalled. "I was interested in medicine but did not want to do clinical or counseling psychology. I wanted to work in mental health, but I wanted something different. When I stumbled on the MFT field, it resonated deeply, and so began my journey."

Searching for a doctoral program as her master's program neared completion, Dr. Karume first learned of the Loma Linda University School of Behavioral Health from one of her professors.

"Loma Linda University was the epitome to me because of the 'To make man whole' slogan," Dr. Karume said. "My experience at LLU went beyond just the education." It was at Loma Linda University that she too became a Medical Family Therapist—her passion for medicine and mental health were finally combined.

Dr. Karume has also written a book to help struggling families navigate life's challenges: *What Is This? Finding Direction When Life's Stories Leave You and Your Family Speechless*. The book grew out of some challenging times Karume faced in 2019. "That year was extremely painful for me and my family. Throughout that year, I kept asking, 'What is this?'" Dr. Karume said. "I wanted a guide on managing the challenges we were facing but could not find one. In desperation, I asked God what He would have me do with this pain since He is in the business of turning pain into victory. He said, 'Write a Bible study.'"

What Is This? follows a Bible study format that Dr. Karume developed to help other families have a roadmap through life's curveballs. She also uses the volume as a tool to insert some therapeutic assistance into the situations of those who will not go to therapy. The book is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble in both print and electronic versions.

Dr. Karume frequently shares her memories from her time at the School of Behavioral Health with potential students. "I tell them about the holistic experience and the paramount education," she said. "Recently, I recommended someone to join the Child Life Specialist MS program as well as a student to the PhD program. It is my hope they get to experience Loma Linda University as I did."

Addressing Inequities: Alumna's Work in Native American Healthcare Access

Larry Becker

Access to health care and significant disparities consistently challenge residents of Native American communities, with many Native regions facing serious shortfalls in services.

For Dr. Tina Lincourt (Clinical Psychology PhD, 2018) her work in Indian Country offers a significant opportunity to directly impact the fundamental challenge of providing sufficient healthcare resources to Native populations.

Dr. Lincourt's desire to serve Native American populations grows from her heritage as a tribal member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Her background positions her to be a trusted source for Native American communities and help bridge the trust gap between healthcare providers and the Native communities that have historically been subject to experimentation and deception under the guise of "help." Although higher ethical standards for clinicians in Native American communities play a crucial role in increasing trust in the modern day, other challenges are less able to be directly addressed.

"Native American health centers are few and far between," Dr. Lincourt said. "Further, biases in mainstream healthcare can often make it challenging for Native Americans to seek care at such places." Native American health organizations are often understaffed, underfunded, and face difficulties recruiting and training qualified clinicians. The rural locations of many Native health organizations are an additional challenge to providing adequate care to these communities in need.

"Incentivizing employment at Native American health organizations is one way to approach a solution; however, this may still be a challenge," Dr. Lincourt said.

Dr. Lincourt says one challenge she personally faces is ensuring healthcare providers understand the context of people in Native communities, navigate those challenges, and create training sites for students and psychologists who work in tribal areas.

"Being required to utilize evidence-based practices (EBPs) or psychological and cognitive test measures on individuals, groups, or communities EBPs when many psychological test measures and approaches to treatment have not been empirically validated within these communities is a challenge," she said.

Dr. Lincourt discovered the School of Behavioral Health after being accepted into a different program as a master's level clinician. Deciding to explore if there might be some interesting alternative programs, she spoke with the Psychology department's administrative assistant Shari Lane. She became intrigued by what LLU had to offer and decided to apply.

While Dr. Lincourt's initial interest was to work with the Veterans Administration or the military, that path changed as she began to form relationships with Native American psychologists. She found support in a mentorship community of the Society of Indian Psychologists (SIP) called Reservation to Graduation (R2G). Her relationships within that group influenced her career trajectory, eventually shifting her focus to

“Loma Linda University is a great place to gain fundamental knowledge of clinical psychology.”

working with Native American communities to reduce health disparities and be a conduit to improve mental health outcomes.

Dr. Kendal Boyd, Associate Chair, encouraged Dr. Lincourt's graduate school and post-graduation goals. “He included me in trainings at the Psychology department to increase knowledge of American Indian/Alaska Native communities for future psychologists. I deeply appreciate his support and inclusion,” she said.

Dr. Lincourt also points to the mentorship offered by Dr. Janet Sonne, Professor Emeritus, as an essential part of her School of Behavioral Health experience. “I continue to work diligently to model my practice and supervision style after her stellar ethical, kind, knowledgeable, and thoughtful approach,” she said.

She also believes students considering graduate psychology studies should look to the School of Behavioral Health and its programs.

“Loma Linda University is a great place to gain fundamental knowledge of clinical psychology,” she said. “Further, the practicum opportunities are incredible thanks to the hard work of the SBH team in creating relationships with many wonderful sites. My training experiences were incredibly robust and solid, ultimately impacting my current practice.”



Alumna Explores Hidden Power Dynamics in Therapist-Client Relationships

Larry Becker

Dr. Debora Handojo (Clinical Psychology PsyD, 2023) has always been fascinated by people and the relationships that form throughout life. This fascination ultimately led her to research the power dynamics of the therapist-client relationship and how they might affect the overall therapeutic process and outcomes.

Two factors led to Dr. Handojo initiating research into the therapist-client relationship. Dr. Handojo's dissertation chair, Dr. Janet Sonne, was already researching the interpersonal dynamics between therapists and their clients. Dr. Handojo's graduate studies at the Loma Linda University School of Behavioral Health also sparked her interest in better understanding the health and well-being effects occurring as part of the therapeutic relationship.

Two factors led Dr. Handojo to conduct research on the therapist-client relationship: her dissertation chair, Dr. Janet Sonne, actively researches this fascinating dimension of therapy, while Dr. Handojo's studies at LLU sparked an interest in whether a therapist-client power difference exists. Her research also revealed a gap in psychology research focusing on the nature of power dynamics.

"Given that we know that the quality of the therapeutic relationship significantly impacts therapeutic outcomes, it seemed important to have a better understanding of power—a key attribute of relationships," Dr. Handojo said.

After reviewing relevant literature, Dr. Handojo was able to reach five conclusions about the therapist-client relationship:

- (1) power dynamics do exist in the therapeutic relationship;
- (2) power dynamics are relational and interdependent;
- (3) power is affected by individual, dyadic, and contextual-level factors;
- (4) power has both imposing and resisting influences; and
- (5) power is evaluated on a subjective basis.

"We hope that our work can help facilitate a more nuanced understanding of power for both clinicians and researchers," Dr. Handojo said. "The power literature is already shifting from an abuse-avoidance perspective to a more curious approach, which is an optimal environment for growth."

Currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at Deer Oaks Behavioral Health, Dr. Handojo intends to focus more on her role as a clinician. However, she does foresee applying her understanding of the power dynamic to her relationships with clients and colleagues.

"The therapeutic relationship and outcomes can benefit when both the therapist and client are aware and able to navigate power dynamics in the relationship collaboratively," she said.



Dr. Handojo credits Dr. Sonne's constant inspiration, mentorship, and motivation as a significant influence in her academic experience at Loma Linda University.

"Along with serving as my dissertation chair, she was also the professor for two of my favorite courses—'Ethics' and 'Clinical Supervision,'" she said. "Her rich professional experiences and research knowledge inform her teaching style."

Dr. David Vermeersch, who enthusiastically calls Dr. Handojo's work ground-breaking, was another of her mentors, and she says his leadership as Department Chair created a welcoming environment for students in the Psychology department. He also cleared time on his schedule to serve on Dr. Handojo's dissertation committee.

"Each professor is unquestionably very knowledgeable in their fields of interest, as well as welcoming to any student willing to explore the vast diversity of academic and professional experiences the department offers," Dr. Handojo said. "I am grateful I could spend my professional-formative years at Loma Linda University."

When selecting a school for her doctoral studies, Dr. Handojo concluded LLU was a school that was close to her home and fit her values.



“LLU is a prestigious university for health careers, and it offered a program that fit my desires to focus on clinical experiences,” Dr. Handojo said. “Most importantly, LLU mirrored my hopes for my life, which was to merge both my professional identity as a psychologist and my personal identity as a Christian.” She said science and religion are often falsely presented as opposites, but Loma Linda University is a hub for leaders and professionals who exemplify quite the contrary.

“It’s been great to see and embody the reality that science and religion are not just harmonious but are critical to seeing and treating others holistically,” she added.

Dr. Handojo says students considering a career in behavioral health should strongly consider the School of Behavioral Health.

“LLU is unique because of the active presence of clinics and research labs on campus that serve the immediate community,” she said. “Whether you are focusing on clinical or research experience, fairly guaranteed opportunities are offered on campus.”

Dr. Handojo adds that LLU also emphasizes establishing positive relationships with the larger community, allowing students access to diverse training opportunities beyond campus.

“LLU also does a great job at providing an intimate and encouraging base for learning,” Dr. Handojo said. “Staff genuinely care and attend to each cohort—from their first arrival, to each year, and beyond graduation. I am thankful for the many close relationships with other students and faculty I made at LLU, and I wish the same for aspiring future health professionals.”

Loma Linda
is a hub for
leaders and
professionals.

Alumni of the Year

2023 SBH Alumna of the Year

Dr. Kimberly Freeman

Dr. Kimberly Freeman is an exemplary teacher, clinician, and servant who reflects the core values of both the School of Behavioral Health and Loma Linda University at large.

Dr. Freeman has served as a Professor at LLU for over 20 years and holds the position of Executive Associate Chair of the Social Work and Social Ecology department, and also serves as Program Director of the Master of Social Work and Doctor of Social Work programs. Dr. Freeman has also held various additional positions at LLU, including as Clinical Coordinator of the Early Steps program and as Founding Pediatric Psychologist at Kids FARE.

In addition to her dedication to excellence in fulfilling her academic roles, Dr. Freeman is an accomplished Licensed Psychologist and Social Worker, with over 20 years of post-licensure experience in working with high-risk infants and children. She specializes in infant development assessments, neurodevelopmental evaluations, and psychotherapy for children and adolescents who present with complex behavioral problems, self-harm, and/or trauma.

Dr. Freeman's commitment to promoting resiliency and wellness in children is reflected in her research, clinical work, and interna-

tional outreach efforts, which include her 20 years as a member of the Loma Linda University International Behavioral Health Trauma Team. Her work has taken her to over 35 countries, where she has conducted numerous presentations and training sessions on how to intervene and promote optimal development for high-risk children from a global perspective.

SBH was proud to honor Dr. Kimberly Freeman as the 2023 Alumna of the Year and looks forward to her continued contributions.



2024 SBH Alumnus of the Year

Dr. Naveen Jonathan



Dr. Naveen Jonathan is a leader in the field of marriage and family therapy. He is active in academia and clinical practice, allowing him to make significant contributions in his field through publications, teaching, and public speaking. He partnered in the evaluation of the Chapman Marriage &

Family Therapy (MFT) Clinical Competency model, which was proposed in 2019 and resulted in the Chapman MFT program becoming the first nationally accredited program by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), to develop a competency-based approach for all students in the program. This contribution has had a transformative impact on nationally accredited MFT programs in shifting from an outcomes-based approach to a competency-based approach for students.

He actively engages in community partnerships to support bilingual community mental health services for individuals and families. Through innovative interdisciplinary practicum experiences, he has partnered with graduate health professions at Chapman University to create dynamic training opportunities for MFT students,

as demonstrated in programs such as Stroke Boot Camp, Pediatric Family Support Group, and support groups that bring together students and faculty from multiple graduate health professions to support individuals and their loved ones in their health journey. He is currently expanding these collaborations to address the needs of clients with Parkinson's Disease, further emphasizing his dedication to improving outcomes for clients and their families through interdisciplinary teamwork, while simultaneously supporting the clinical training of MFT students.

In recognition of his clinical and scholarly pursuits, service to his community, and the promotion of behavioral health embodying this University's motto, "To Make Man Whole," the School of Behavioral Health was pleased to name Dr. Naveen Jonathan the 2024 SBH Alumnus of the Year.

\$2.5 million HRSA grant received for integrated care improvements

Adolescent suicides are up 62% in a decade. Mental illness pervades the nation after the COVID-19 pandemic. To combat this drop in mental health, a project titled ICARE Teams: Integrated Care to Achieve Resilience in Engaged Teams is improving family physicians' skills to treat mental illness in youth and across the lifespan.

Hobart Lee, MD and Kelly R. Morton, PhD received \$2.5 million from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Primary Care Training Enhancement grant program to support this project. LLU Health Educational Consortium (LLUHEC) Family Medicine Residency mental-behavioral health curriculum has been enhanced to address the needs of our underserved community with high levels of social determinants of health that impact the mental health of youth and their families. The project is also enhancing mental-behavioral health didactics, including online integrated care module development with Department of Psychology faculty including Dr. Bridgette Peteet, Dr. Tori Van Dyk, Dr. David Vermeersch, and Dr. Maya Boustani. ICARE also added a one-month required child-adolescent psychiatric hospital rotation by working with the LLU Department of Psychiatry and Ara Anspikian, MD. Further, ICARE is enhancing content in three other rotations and implementing a high-fidelity Primary Care Behavioral Health (PCBH) Model in the SAC Health FQHC resident continuity clinic. LLU Psychology Health Track Practicum students will help create PCBH Model care pathways in the Family Medicine Residency program.

ICARE curricular enhancements are improving outcomes in the underserved Inland Empire region of southern California after Medicaid expansion by training family physicians to prevent, identify, diagnose, treat, and refer for mental-behavioral health concerns. The new pediatric psychiatric hospitalization rotation will improve skills in pediatric psychopharmacology, individual, play and family therapy to treat PTSD, self-harm, and substance abuse.

The LLUHEC Family Medicine Residency Program will ultimately increase resident training in mental-behavioral health for 87 total residents. The training is being accomplished by family medicine faculty who have additional expertise in psychiatry, lifestyle, or chronic pain as well as psychologists, psychiatrists, lifestyle medicine fellows, and psychology doctoral students. The program evaluation will capitalize on an existing QI infrastructure to achieve the quadruple aim of better care, better health, lower costs, and improved provider resiliency. This five-year project is producing a pipeline of primary care providers and psychologists who can provide mental health care within a primary care setting.



NIH grant to support prevention of anxiety and depression in teens

Approximately 20% of young people experience anxiety or depression by the time they turn 18, with ethnic minority youth experiencing the brunt of this issue. Improvement in problem-solving skills reduces depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal ideation, and corresponds to reduced symptoms and better adjustment for youth with externalizing problems, pointing to its transdiagnostic potential. Problem-Solving Skills Training (PSST) is consistently revealed to be the most common element across youth mental health prevention and promotion programs; however, dosage and delivery vary—including the extent to which quantity, sequencing, temporality, steps, and strategies account for its transdiagnostic value and impact.

As part of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant awarded to Dr. Maya Boustani and her research partner Dr. Stacy Frazier at Florida International University, they have assembled an Advisory Board of scientific and community experts to inform two aims. First, they examined PSST for variability in dosage, delivery, and cultural considerations, and variance in internalizing outcome effect sizes. They have identified universal and selected prevention programs for adolescents and coded dosage, delivery, cultural content and tailoring, and impact and

used random effects meta-regression to examine variance accounted for in problem solving skills and internalizing outcomes. Findings from these analyses allowed them to achieve their second aim: to develop, assess, and deploy a best practice PSST resource guide (TIPS = Teach It Plain & Simple) for youth service providers. They recruited frontline providers from youth service settings to receive, review and integrate TIPS into their work. They have collected feedback via surveys and semi-structured interviews in a sequential mixed method design, and are conducting thematic analysis to assess usability, appropriateness, acceptability and feasibility.

Findings will inform modifications to design for wider dissemination. The planned design of this grant allows for rapid infusion of research findings into practice settings for underserved communities to increase the impact of mental health interventions. By unpacking the “black box” of PSST, Dr. Boustani and her team hope to speed its scale-up as an efficient, effective, stand-alone, culturally congruent brief intervention tool for youth service providers in a variety of settings.

Grant funding to expand social work in underserved communities

Loma Linda University School of Behavioral Health has been honored with two grants from the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), aimed at expanding the social work workforce in line with California's initiative to boost the presence of social service professionals in underserved regions.

The first award totals \$3 million, to cover tuition and fees for 25 eligible incoming Master of Social Work students. The grant is specifically targeted for students who are economically disadvantaged, come from underrepresented backgrounds, and/or reside in underserved communities. Additionally, the funding will facilitate the recruitment of new faculty and staff, marketing efforts, supervision and mentorship programs, as well as the establishment and maintenance of high-quality internship placements in underserved areas.

These scholarship funds have been life-changing for our students, all of whom were struggling to achieve their dream of becoming professional clinical social workers.

Jakem Guizar, one of our 2023 HCAI awardees stated, "This scholarship has changed my life, furthering my inspiration and motivation to do more for my community. The HCAI scholarship will provide education that will enable me to provide better care and enhance my capacity to provide care to those who need it most. Through this scholarship, I will be better equipped to serve and engage with underserved youth and young adults needing behavioral health services and will help fill the gap of needed professionals."

The second HCAI award totals nearly \$1,000,000 and will be disbursed from the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) over two years. This award provides a \$25,000 stipend to support 14 students each year who have demonstrated a commitment to working in behavioral health settings in rural and

underserved communities. This funding assists students in meeting their financial obligations during their graduate program and serves to build a pipeline from graduate school to employment in behavioral health agencies situated in areas with the greatest needs.

These scholarships represent a crucial step towards ensuring that deserving individuals have access to the education and resources they need to thrive as developing clinicians. We are excited to witness the positive impact these opportunities will have on the lives of our recipients and are

grateful for the support that has made this initiative possible.

Dr. Beverly Buckles, Dean of the School of Behavioral Health stated, "These grants are an indication that the state of California sees Loma Linda University as an important institution within this region. Further, the links we have between the University, community, and our healthcare system put us in a good position to succeed with these programs."

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the HCAI and CalSWEC for their support and look forward to the transformative work that lies ahead.

These scholarships represent a crucial step towards ensuring that deserving individuals have access to the education and resources they need to thrive in their academic pursuits.





Celebrating 50 Years of Student-Centered Excellence: A Milestone Anniversary for Counseling & Family Sciences

By Winetta A. Oloo

The 2023-24 academic year marked a significant milestone in the history of the Department of Counseling & Family Sciences (CFS) as it celebrated its 50th anniversary. For half a century, the department has stood at the forefront of academic excellence, innovation, community engagement, and advancing knowledge in Child Life, Counseling, Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy.

Founded in 1973, the department embarked on its journey with a single academic program, a one-year master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. From those humble beginnings, CFS has grown exponentially, now offering three master's programs, a certificate, a dual-degree master's with certificate, and two doctoral programs with a blend of online and in-person options. Over the years, the department expanded its curriculum and clinical training, welcomed expert faculty members, and produced diverse research initiatives.

Through many key accomplishments, CFS encouraged positive change in the evolving behavioral health landscape.

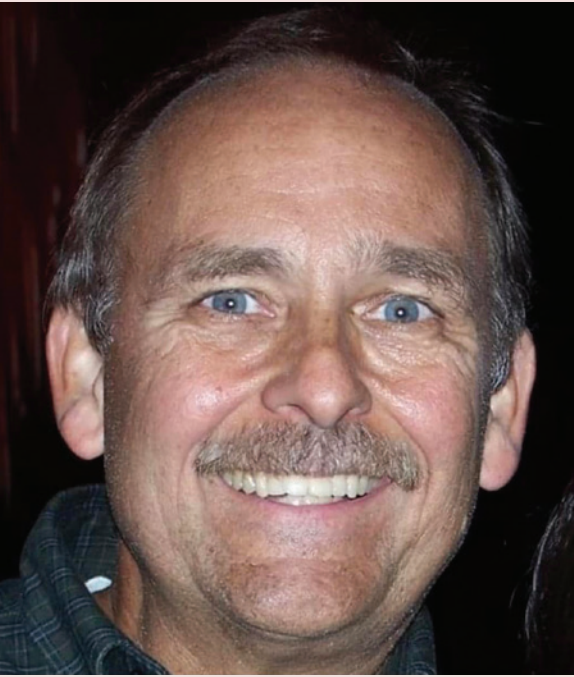
- The creation of national endorsement criteria for all Child Life Specialist programs in the United States
- Being among the first endorsers of a California license for clinical counseling professionals
- The creation of the Doctor of Marital and Family Therapy degree, now offered at universities across the nation
- Conducting hundreds of research studies and contributing to even more scholarly publications used worldwide for teaching, research, and clinical innovation
- Securing grants to fund numerous student scholarships

However, what set CFS apart was not only its academic achievements but also its lasting impact on students and alumni—the true heartbeat of every CFS program. The more than 3,000 graduates of CFS went on to make significant contributions locally, nationwide, and across the globe. From serving clients and teaching here at their alma mater to leading academic and clinical programs at universities, hospitals, and other organizations around the world, to providing top-notch treatment at non-profit and for-profit clinics and treatment centers, CFS alums are living the mission of CFS—facilitating wholeness by promoting health, healing, and hope to individuals, families, and communities through education, research, professional training, community service, and global outreach.

CFS and the School of Behavioral Health planned various events and activities throughout the academic year to honor this momentous occasion. The celebration culminated in a grand anniversary gathering, bringing together alumni, retired and current faculty and staff for a collective reflection on the journey and shared anticipation for the future. To learn more about the anniversary gathering, please read our SBH blog post.

The Department of Counseling and Family Sciences and the School of Behavioral Health are incredibly grateful to its students, graduates, faculty, and staff for their contributions to the department's success. We look forward to the next 50 years of service, growth, innovation, research, and clinical contributions to the Loma Linda University community and beyond.





For more than four decades, Terry (as he was known by his colleagues and friends) significantly contributed to the behavioral health arena.

Celebrating the Memory of Our Colleague and Friend **Terrence J. Forrester, MSW, LCSW**

March 30, 1950 – June 5, 2023

For more than four decades, Terry (as he was known by his colleagues and friends) significantly contributed to the behavioral health arena—sharing his expertise in the academe and practice areas of child welfare, juvenile justice, residential and in-patient psychiatric care; and in supervising and guiding marriage and family therapy and social work interns. He contributed to the development of the Behavioral Health Institute as a member of the original planning committee; served on both original Mental Health Service Act and Child Welfare education committees; and was a co-author of the statewide competencies for mental health practice, an initiative guided by Loma Linda University. He received several service awards for his dedication to graduate social work education, including awards from the California Social Work Education Center, Child Welfare Training Academy, and the Phi Alpha Honor Society.

Terry graduated from the University of Cincinnati and University of Louisville with degrees in psychology and social work, with specialties in psychodynamic theory and family systems. He commenced his academic stint at Loma Linda University in 1996 as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work—teaching courses on human behavior, clinical practice, and supervision; later being

promoted to the rank of Associate Professor and serving as the Director of Field Education for the Master of Social Work program, and Associate Chair for the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology. Terry retired in 2010 and in 2016 was bestowed the distinction of an emeritus faculty member in the School of Behavioral Health, though he continued to serve the School through his expertise in marketing and recruitment. In 2017, in recognition of his unwavering dedication to excellence in behavioral health practice, education, and community service, the Loma Linda University School of Behavioral Health presented him with its Distinguished Service Award.

A strong advocate of community service, Terry was an active member of various boards including the Inland Temporary Homes and the Redlands Family Service Association. He also supported the Family Life Saving Foundation which has assisted over 47,000 families in the Los Angeles area. Passionate about physical exercise for healthy living, he volunteered his time as a state-certified tennis coach at Redlands East Valley High School.

Upon notification of Terry's passing, the School of Behavioral Health reached out to colleagues to share some reflections of their friend and colleague.

Terry's presence among us was truly extraordinary, embodying the core values of the social work profession, particularly his unwavering dedication to social justice. Throughout a remarkable career spanning over five decades, Terry made significant contributions to the field of behavioral health. A man of impeccable integrity he tirelessly devoted himself to fostering the growth and excellence of his students, investing countless hours in supervising and guiding aspiring clinicians. —*Dr. Bev Buckles*

Terry was a beacon of light, known for his passionate dedication to students and the field of social work. His legacy is one of selfless giving and genuine care and interest in others. He always made himself available and was the first to step in when needed. His caring spirit has had a lasting impact on our department, and he is greatly missed. —*Dr. Kimberly Freeman*

Terry was a teacher, a mentor, and a friend, I am grateful to have had Terry in my life. He will always be a significant influence on who I am as a social worker and his endless energy and enthusiasm will continue to inspire me. He made an unforgettable impact on social work field education in the Inland Empire, and he is still remembered throughout California with great respect for his professional contributions. —*Prof. Talolo Lepale*

The impact of Terry's boundless generosity, wisdom, and unwavering compassion will forever reside in our hearts. Rest well, dear friend.

Psychology department hosts WPA's 103rd Annual Convention

The Loma Linda University Department of Psychology was honored to host the 103rd Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association (WPA) at the Riverside Convention Center from April 27 to April 29, 2023. Dr. Patricia Flynn served as the Scientific Program Chair, inviting over 30 distinguished speakers aligned with the convention's theme of "Culture, Diversity, and Health." This gathering marked one of the most highly attended WPA conventions in recent history, attracting over 2,700 students, academics, and professionals from the Western United States.

The convention was particularly memorable for our LLU community as faculty, students, staff, and alumni collaborated to contribute to its resounding success. LLU students and faculty actively participated in over 30 poster presentations, paper sessions, and symposia. Through the involvement of the Department of Psychology faculty members as chairs of invited speaker sessions, the contributions of our students as WPA volunteers, the impactful presentations by Drs. Hector Betancourt and Bridgette Peteet as distinguished speakers, and the invited symposium on our 4P Scholarship Program, LLU left an indelible mark on the WPA psychology community.

In addition to learning about the scientific contributions of LLU Psychology faculty and students, WPA attendees had the opportunity to delve into Dr. Betancourt's thirty years of research addressing critical questions central to understanding the role of culture in psychology and health. They also gained insights into

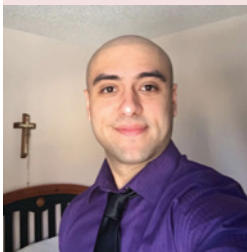
Dr. Peteet's recent work establishing community-academic partnerships to address COVID-19 vaccine disparities among Black communities. Additionally, Drs. Peteet, Flynn, and Morton, accompanied by two of our 4P Scholars, Savannah Betancourt and Ellie Robledo, discussed initiatives to recruit, train, and retain students from disadvantaged backgrounds for work in integrated primary care settings.

Three of our students in the Department of Psychology were honored as WPA award winners. Rosalva Mejia received the Steven Underliedier Graduate Research Award, and both Kiyana Eshai and Daniel Franz were recognized with the WPA Travel Scholarship Award for their outstanding research accomplishments.

Amid the success of the WPA Convention, we took a moment to celebrate and enjoy each other's company. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni gathered in a relaxed environment to commemorate our shared achievements. Reflecting on the convention, it not only showcased our collective dedication to advancing psychological research at LLU but also strengthened our sense of belonging to a broader community of psychologists.



Alumni Notes



Gabriel Arredondo ('12), Counseling MS and PPS School Counseling, has been enjoying his career as an LPCC working with at-risk youth in San Bernardino. He has completed a decade of clinical work and is delighted. He also serves as a contracted professor at the School of Behavioral Health. He plays music with his band on the weekends, which has been a passion of

his. He is thriving and giving back to his community. "Thank you LLU," Gabriel says, "for all of the quality education and training!"

Dr. Kate Truitt ('08 & '11), Clinical Psychology PhD, is excited to share that her first book, *Healing in Your Hands: Self-Havening Exercises to Harness Neuroplasticity, Heal Traumatic Stress, and Build Resilience* was released on December 6, 2022 and has already been translated into several different languages. Since that time, Dr. Truitt has published a second book, *Keep Breathing: A Psychologist's Intimate Journey Through Loss, Trauma, and Rediscovering Life!*

Dr. Elena Duong ('18), Clinical Psychology PsyD, worked at various facilities after graduating and becoming licensed as a

psychologist. This ultimately led to co-founding and opening a telehealth-based private practice, Blooming Wellness Psychotherapy, Inc., in California, which specializes in working collaboratively with highly sensitive people and Asian Americans to feel empowered as they connect with their authentic selves. Learn more at bloomingwellnesspsychotherapy.com.

Bertrand Moses ('13), Marital & Family Therapy MS, recently began a new career with UNICEF. He now serves as the Child Protection Officer (Mental Health & Psychosocial Support) responsible for implementing policies, programs, and

initiatives in 12 countries in the Caribbean under the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office.



Veronica Gonzalez ('16), MSW and Criminal Justice MS, is now an LCSW and Psychiatric Social Worker at Kaiser Baldwin Park, BHIOS Team.

Commencement 2023 and 2024

Over the past two years, our School of Behavioral Health has had the privilege of coming together as a community to honor the dedication and perseverance of our students. Commencement weekends in both 2023 and 2024 provided invaluable opportunities to celebrate the knowledge our graduates have gained, the skills they acquired, and their exceptionally bright futures! From individual department gatherings to master's and doctoral hooding to the commencement ceremony, each event reflected the unity and shared purpose of our SBH family.

The significance of behavioral health has never been more apparent than in recent years, and our graduates are already making a substantial impact. In 2023, we proudly graduated 116 students, followed by 128 graduates in 2024. These accomplished professionals serve the underserved with cutting-edge clinical interventions and programs, present at conferences worldwide, and submit numerous papers for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Each one leaves their mark on the behavioral health landscape. We eagerly anticipate their continued contributions to addressing pressing challenges in behavioral health as healthcare professionals, researchers, educators, and advocates.

We extend heartfelt congratulations to all of our graduates from the past two years, with a special shout-out to the inaugural graduating classes of our dual-degree MS Counseling & MS MFT with Certificate program in 2023 and Doctor of Social Work program in 2024. To all of our esteemed alumni, you truly inspire us and stand as living proof of the transformative power of education—our sincerest wishes for continued success and well-being.

—Dr. Winetta A. Oloo, Associate Dean
for Academic and Student Affairs





2023 Student Awardees



President's Award: Dr. Valerie Watts

"I am very appreciative of the opportunities presented to me during my time at Loma Linda University and to be awarded the SBH President's and Research Excellence Awards. My

achievements throughout my education would not have been possible without the support of my professors, the faculty in the Psychology department, or my friends and family."



Dean's Award for Doctoral Degree Programs: Dr. Elizabeth James

"I am truly grateful to receive the Dean's Award for Doctoral Degree Programs. This recognition is a tremendous privilege, and I would like to express my sincere appreciation for this distinguished honor. I will cherish this award and will forever be

motivated to strive for continued growth and excellence in my professional pursuits. I would like to thank the SBH community and all who have provided the wisdom, support, and encouragement to achieve my goals and milestones."



Dean's Award for Master's Degree Programs: Veronica Lovo Argueta

"What an honor! I want to express my sincerest gratitude to the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology faculty for selecting me to receive this award—special thanks to family, friends, and Dr. Butler for supporting and inspiring me through this journey."



Wil Alexander Whole Person Care Award: Tiffany Siebold

"I am so grateful to the wonderful staff of Loma Linda University and my peers who supported me through this program. Thank you for the honor of receiving this award!"

2024 Student Awardees



President's Award: Dr. Christopher Blank

"I am extremely honored to receive the SBH President's and Research Excellence Awards. It would not have been possible without the support of my family, friends, and faculty at LLU. Mr. Rogers said to 'look for the helpers, you will always find the helpers.'"



Dean's Award for Doctoral Degree Programs: Dr. Shondel Mishaw

"I am humbled and grateful to receive the Dean's Award for Doctoral Students and the Research Excellence Award. This recognition is a significant milestone in my educational journey and inspires me to continue striving for excellence."



Dean's Award for Master's Degree Programs: Dr. Yi-Shen Ma

"I am honored and humbled to have been chosen as the recipient of this award. The skills I have acquired in the program will surely make me a more effective clinician,

teacher, and advocate for social justice. I am incredibly grateful for all the knowledge I have gained from the talented and passionate faculty of the School."



Wil Alexander Whole Person Care Award: Greta Recinto Casino Aniesha Kleinhammer

"I am incredibly grateful and touched to have been chosen as the recipient of the prestigious Wil Alexander Whole Person Care and Leadership Service Awards. Beyond the classroom, my passion for holistic wellness has been a guiding light for my personal growth. This commitment to whole person care has allowed me to wholeheartedly support and nurture resilience and well-being within diverse communities."

"I take it as a great compliment to be honored with the Wil Alexander Whole Person Care Award. Treating the whole client must remain at the core of what we do in our work as clinicians and leaders."



SBH Distinguished Service Award 2023: Dr. Brian Distelberg

The School of Behavioral Health was honored to present the 2023 Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Brian Distelberg, tenured Professor in the SBH Department of Counseling and Family Sciences and Director of Research for the LLU Behavioral Medicine Center.

Dr. Distelberg is widely recognized as a translational researcher and advanced clinical innovator supporting the development of multiple programs for Loma Linda University Health (LLUH). Among these is the MEND (Mastering Each New Direction) program that supports the integration of behavioral health and medical care for patients and their families to regain and maintain emotional health and balance during and after medical illnesses or treatments, including life-management and coping following organ transplant.

Dr. Distelberg's clinical innovation and research have also resulted in external funding through federal, state, and private sources, expanding the integration of behavioral health services throughout LLUH and among collaborative partners. In addition, Dr. Distelberg has demonstrated leadership in the development and evaluation of family services within Southern California's public housing authorities. Overall, Dr. Distelberg has obtained a combined total of external funding in excess of \$19 million, utilizing these opportunities to provide students in SBH and other LLU schools with advanced clinical and research experiences. Dr. Distelberg is also a prolific author, having published over 70 works that support the dissemination of research and clinical findings in integrated behavioral health and family services.

Congratulations to Dr. Distelberg on his many years of distinguished service and invaluable contributions to this School and institution.

2023 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AWARD

2023 GRADUATES

- Elizabeth J. James, DMFT
- Ruth A. S. Nichols, PhD
- Paige Courtney Wright, PsyD
- Debora Handojo, PsyD
- Brooke Kania Millham, PsyD
- Valerie Watts, PsyD
- Catherine Fisher, PhD

FACULTY EXCELLENCE AWARD —

SCHOLAR EDUCATOR

- Nichola Seaton Ribadu, DMFT
- David A. Vermeersch, PhD

SCHOLAR RESEARCHER

- Alex Dubov, PhD

SCHOLAR CLINICIAN

- Colleen A. Brenner, PhD



SBH Distinguished Service Award 2024: Dr. Cameron Neece

The School of Behavioral Health was delighted to present Dr. Cameron L. Neece, Professor in the Department of Psychology, with the 2024 SBH Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Neece joined the SBH faculty in 2011, shortly after completing her doctoral program. Her research focuses on the development of child behavior problems and psychopathology in children with autism and other developmental disabilities; her particular area of expertise examines family factors that either exacerbate risk or promote resilience in children at risk. She is a prolific author that has published numerous scholarly articles.

Her research has resulted in multiple National Institute of Health (NIH) grants to conduct clinical trials, including being awarded several R01 grants (the most prestigious NIH research award) to examine the impact of adding a mindfulness-based intervention to behavioral interventions for young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities. Due to her outstanding research contributions, Dr. Neece has been the recipient of numerous awards and distinctions, including American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Wolfenberger Valor Award; the American Psychological Association Division 33 Fellow; the Western Psychological Association Early Career Outstanding Research Award; and the LLU School of Behavioral Health Excellence in Research Award.

Congratulations to Dr. Neece on her scholarly endeavors, excellence in research and academic pursuits, and unwavering commitment and service to the values of this School and institution.

2024 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AWARD

2024 GRADUATES

- Christine Chi Nguyen, DSW
- Yesenia Teran, DMFT
- Christopher S. Blank, PsyD
- Shondel Elizabeth Mishaw, DMFT
- Daniel Franz, PhD
- Vee Li, PsyD

FACULTY EXCELLENCE AWARD—

SCHOLAR EDUCATOR

- Mary Vogel Moline, PhD, DrPH, MPH, MS
- Christi Elaine Bell, MSW, LCSW

SCHOLAR RESEARCHER

- Jackie Williams-Reade, PhD
- Hector Mainhard Betancourt, PhD
- Susanne B. Montgomery, PhD, MPH, MS

SCHOLAR CLINICIAN

- Lena Lopez Bradley, PhD, LMFT
- Randall Richard Walker, MS, LMFT

Substance Misuse Is on the Rise—How Should Mental Health Professionals Respond?

By Randall Walker, MS, LMFT

If you follow the news, you have undoubtedly heard a lot about the ongoing drug overdose epidemic impacting many parts of the United States. In May 2023, *The New York Times* reported preliminary totals for overdose deaths as published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The article's headline said it all: "U.S. Recorded Nearly 110,000 Overdose Deaths in 2022" (*New York Times*, May 17, 2023). Nearly 75,000 of those deaths were the result of the person using a synthetic opioid, such as fentanyl. These numbers are staggering and represent an alarming increase over the past several years.

During fall quarter 2023, I had the opportunity to participate in the Loma Linda University Bioethics Grand Rounds facilitated by Dr. Yi-Shen Ma from the School of Religion. The panel also included Dr. George Christison, a psychiatrist at the LLU Behavioral Medicine Center who has a background in working with addictions. Our topic was, "Addressing Addiction Stigma in Healthcare: A Conversation" and our goal was to talk about how our professional attitudes make it difficult for those struggling with substance use disorders (SUDs) to get the help they need. It was a rich conversation with many thought-provoking questions from the audience.

As child life specialists, LCSWs, LMFTs, LPCCs, and clinical psychologists, we may be tempted to tell ourselves, "I don't work with addicts" (or more appropriately, "people with substance use disorders") or "I don't have such people on my caseload. I refer them all to someone else." The truth is, however, many of us encoun-

ter individuals living with addictions every day; we just do not recognize them because they do not fit the stereotype we have of someone struggling with an SUD. They do not fit the image we have come to expect from representations in the media. They remain unrecognized, hidden in our caseloads, in our communities, in our classrooms, in our workplaces.

They might be one of the partners in the couple coming for marital counseling this afternoon. Substance use is rarely discussed in session because the couple does not recognize the impact it is having on their relationship. As their marital therapist, we do not bring it up because we cannot imagine that "such nice people" would have an issue with substances. Perhaps it's the nurse or doctor who has started using to deal with pain and the demands of clinical practice following all of the changes brought about by the pandemic. We look the other way when they come to work looking like something is wrong. Or maybe it's the teenager who is not using anything themselves but who is living with an adult who has an SUD. We avoid addressing it in our family meetings because we do not want to pry, we do not want to embarrass anyone.

After years of working in the field of SUD treatment, I am convinced more than ever of one thing: all of us have the potential to become addicted to either substances or particular behaviors. It is part of our makeup as humans. It is how our brains are organized and operate. Some of us have been, are, or will become addicted to something in our lives. Some of us are not addicted only because we have not found the "right" substance or behavior. None of us is immune to being significantly impacted by an addiction.

However, whenever we face our professional fears and reservations, whenever we recognize, address, and overcome our preconceived notions about the issue of SUDs and learn to work with individuals and families struggling with addictions, we contribute to preventing a problem from getting worse, we contribute in a small, significant way to keeping someone alive a little longer so that they might eventually find recovery.

Prof. Randall Walker retired during the summer of 2024. We are enormously grateful for his many years of service.



Selected Faculty Publications 2023-2024

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND FAMILY SCIENCES

Cafferky, B. (2023). Balancing the practice of time-out and time-in: Two effective discipline strategies for parents. In W. Oliver & E. Oliver (Eds.), *I will go with my family: Understanding diverse families* (pp. 78-88). *Review and Herald*.

Cafferky, B. M., Reyes, C. A. D., Beaver, S. L., & Shi, L. (2022). "We'll just draw the curtains!": Military wives' postures toward predeployment emotional preparation. *Family Relations*, 71(1), 389-407.

Lamson, A., Hodgson, J., Pratt, K., Mendenhall, T. Wong, A., Sesemann, E., Brown, B., Taylor, E., **Williams-Read, J.**, Blocker, D., Harsh Caspari, J., Zubatsky, M., Martin, M., (2022). Couple and family interventions for high mortality health conditions: A strategic review (2010–2019), *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*.

Spencer, C. M., Stith, S. M., & **Cafferky, B.** (2022). What puts individuals at risk for physical intimate partner violence perpetration? A meta-analysis examining risk markers for men and women. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 23(1), 36-51.

Wong, R. T., **Cafferky, B. M.**, & Alejandro, J. P. (2022). Chronic disease and elder mistreatment: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Bellinger DL, Dulcich MS, Molinaro C, Gifford P, Lorton D, Gridley DS, **Hartman RE.** Psychosocial Stress and Age Influence Depression and Anxiety-Related Behavior, Drive Tumor Inflammatory Cytokines and Accelerate Prostate Cancer Growth in Mice. *Front Oncol.* 2021;11:703848. doi: 10.3389/fonc.2021.703848. eCollection 2021. PubMed PMID: 34604038; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC8481826.

Boustani, M. M. (2023). Decision-making in modular treatments: Avoiding another research-to-practice gap. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 30(1), 63-5. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cps0000135>

Gavaza, P., Rawal, B.M., & **Flynn, P. M.** (2023). An exploratory qualitative study of pharmacy student perspectives of implicit bias in pharmacy practice. *Currents in Phar-*

macy Teaching and Learning, 15, 1, 43-51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2023.02.006>

Hartman RE, Nathan NH, Ghosh N, Pernia CD, Law J, Nuryyev R, Plaia A, Yusof A, Tone B, Dulcich M, Wakeman DR, Dilmac N, Niles WD, Sidman RL, Obenaus A, Snyder EY, Ashwal S. A Biomarker for Predicting Responsiveness to Stem Cell Therapy Based on Mechanism-of-Action: Evidence from Cerebral Injury. *Cell Rep.* 2020 May 12;31(6):107622. doi: 10.1016/j.celrep.2020.107622. PubMed PMID: 32402283.

Hartman R.E., Patel D. Dietary Approaches to the Management of Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Adv Neurobiol.* 2020;24:547-571. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-30402-7_19. PubMed PMID: 32006373.

Ly, A., **Flynn, P.M., & Betancourt, H.** (2023). Cultural beliefs about diabetes-related social exclusion and diabetes distress impact self-care behaviors and HbA1c among patients with Type 2 diabetes. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12529-023-10179-w>

Mazzzone, E., Antommarchi, C., Bagnara, G., Jutzy, H., Alido, A. & **Boustani, M. M.** (2023). School-based Opportunities for Adolescent Recovery (SOARing): The acceptability and feasibility of a DBT Skill training program for at-risk adolescents. *Evidence-Based Practice in Child & Adolescent Mental Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23794925.2023.2224113>

Nance, C., **Betancourt, H., & Flynn, P. M.** (2022). The role of cultural beliefs and distress in adherence to recommended physical activity among patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 45, 472-280. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10865-022-00301-w>

Neece, C. L., Fenning, R. M., **Morrell, H. E.,** & Benjamin, L. R. (2023). Comparative effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction and psychoeducational support on parenting stress in families of autistic preschoolers. *Autism*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613231191558>

Peteet, B., Watts, V., Tucker, E. Brown, P., Hanna, M., Saddlemire, A., Rizk, M., Belliard, J.C., Abdul-Mutakabbir, J., Casey, S., & Simmons, K. (2022). Faith, Fear, & Facts: A COVID-19 Vaccination Hesitancy Intervention for Black Churchgoers. *Vaccines Special Issue: Knowledge and Beliefs*, 10,

1039. doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10071039

Salek A, **Hartman RE.** The placebo and nocebo phenomena – A modern outlook. *International Journal of Neurobiology*. 2022 May; 4(2):1. doi: 10.36266/IJN/147.

Salinas-Onate, N., **Betancourt, H., Flynn, P. M.,** Baeza-Rivera, M. J., & Ortiz, M. (2022). Investigating psychological service utilization employing an integrative socio-structural, cultural, and behavioral framework. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 53, 6, 574-584. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pro0000465>

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ECOLOGY

Alemi, Q., Panter-Brick, C., Oriya, S., et al. (2023). Afghan mental health and psychosocial well-being: a thematic review of 40 years of research and interventions. *BJPsych Open*, 9(4), E125. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2023.502>

Alemi, Q., & Stempel, C. (2023). Examining the effect of perceived group norms on the indirect relationship between intergroup contact and anti-Muslim prejudice among White Americans. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 95, 101814. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2023.101814>

Aréchiga, A., **Freeman, K.,** Tan, A., Lou, J., **Lister, Z.,** **Buckles, B.,** & **Montgomery, S.** (2023). Building resilience and improving wellbeing in Sierra Leone using the Community Resiliency Model post Ebola. *International Journal of Mental Health*, DOI: 10.1080/00207411.2023.2166312.

Kim, E., **Alemi, Q.,** Stempel, C., & Siddiq, H. (2023). Health disparities among Burmese diaspora: an integrative review. *Lancet Regional Health – Southeast Asia*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lansea.2022.100083>

Raine, L., Vo, P., Wilson, S., Begay, P. & Drisko, J. (2023). What is clinical social work? Practitioners' views. *Clinical Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-023-00890-2>

Siddiq, H., **Alemi, Q.,** & Lee, E. (2023). A qualitative inquiry of older Afghan refugee women's individual and sociocultural factors of health and health care experiences in the United States. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 34(2), 143-150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10436596221149692>



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Your gift matters to

Lauren Rea Bacchus

Program: Clinical Psychology, PsyD

Hometown: Camarillo, CA

Lauren is a recipient of a School of Behavioral Health Scholarship.

I decided to attend Loma Linda University based on its mission in promoting equity in mental healthcare, especially promoting accessibility in these resources with underserved and underprivileged communities. As an aspiring clinical child psychologist specializing in autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, etc., I desired to train in a setting offered not only psychological care, but also comprehensive medical care and other supplemental resources and therapies for each of my future clients. At LLU I have received the unique opportunity to be part of a care team that recognizes the uniqueness of each person and the need to support specific areas in each person's life. On the other end, as a student and future clinical provider with chronic medical challenges myself, it was also comforting to know that I would also be able to receive comprehensive, in-depth care allowing me to take care of myself, so that I can be most present for my patients each day.

After graduation, I hope to intertwine my passions for advocacy, research, and clinical assessment for diagnosis and assessment of autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, learning disabilities, etc. Being one of few autistic, neurodiversity-focused clinical psychologists, I have the unique passion to blend these areas together

and provide my patients and their families with comprehensive resources, not only based on evidence-based treatments, but also personal experiences of strategies to overcome adversities and connecting them with specific resources for support. Currently, there is a true need for both advocacy-based autism research and ASD assessment providers, but I am excited to incorporate both in my future after graduation.

Ultimately, I would love to see myself potentially creating a training model for medical and mental health professionals and students to learn about the challenges with autism spectrum disorder from a first-hand perspective and train these professionals to incorporate neurodiversity-inclusive care within their clinical practices and patient-provider interactions. I would also like to innovate an evidence-based intervention for social skills training program to develop a parent module for autistic parents.

To Our Donors: Your gift truly makes a difference in our clinical training, the care we provide, and our service to the community in the Inland Empire and globally. You are truly making a difference in this community locally and beyond on a global scale.

For information on how you can provide scholarship support for School of Behavioral Health students, contact Michela Sands at msands@llu.edu or 909-558-3271. Or donate to SBH online at www.giving.lluh.org/SBH